

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for retrieving information related to a consumer product using a consumer product codes comprising:
 - a) a portable consumer good that lacks the capacity for data transmission; and
 - b) a scanning and storage device in mechanical communication with said portable consumer good, said scanning and storage device including:
 - (i) a scanning element converting a product code symbol into machine readable information representative of said product code; and
 - (ii) a removable memory medium to which said information is stored.
2. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said portable consumer good comprises an electronic device.
3. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said portable consumer good comprises a non-electronic device.
4. The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said electronic device comprises one of the following: a portable radio, a portable mini-disc player, a portable compact disc player, a portable cassette player, a "boom box", a two-way radio, a portable telephone, a pager, a camera, a camcorder, a laptop computer, a portable television, a portable video game and a wristwatch.
5. The apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said non-electronic device comprises one of the following: an article of clothing, a pen and a pocketbook.

6. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said removable memory medium comprises one of the following: a magnetic disc, flash memory, a smart card, a memory stick, a diskette, a CD-ROM, a disk drive, a random access memory chip, and an optical storage device.

7. An apparatus for retrieving and processing information related to a consumer product using a universal product code comprising:

a) a portable consumer device, said portable consumer device including:

(i) a portable consumer good that lacks the capacity for data transmission; and

(ii) a scanning and storage device in mechanical communication with said portable consumer good, said scanning and storage device comprising:

(1) a scanning element converting a printed universal product code symbol into machine readable information representative of said universal product code; and

(2) a removable memory medium to which said information is stored; and

b) an Internet-ready device couplable to one or more Internet-based information servers, said Internet-ready device including a removable memory medium adapted to accept said removable memory medium from said scanning and storage device.

8. An apparatus for retrieving information related to a consumer product comprising:

a) a scanner converting a code of a selected consumer product into machine-readable information representative of said code; and

b) a location-determining device generating information representative of a global position of said apparatus.

9. The apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising a transceiver couplable to a computer network.

10. The apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said transceiver accesses a web site on the computer network based on the code of the selected consumer product.

11. The apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said transceiver accesses a web site on the computer network based on the code of the selected consumer product and the global position of the apparatus.

12. The apparatus according to claim 10, further comprising a processor converting said code of the selected consumer product into a uniform resource locator (URL) of a web site address and selecting information to download from the web site based on the global position of the apparatus.

13. An information retrieval and processing system comprising:

- a) a scanner converting a printed code of a selected consumer product into machine-readable information representative of said code;
- b) a location-determining device generating information representative of its global position;
- c) a computer coupled to the scanner and the location determining device and transmitting a request for information regarding the selected consumer product, said request including the global position and the code of said selected consumer product;
- d) a server coupled to the computer, receiving said request and transmitting a response to said request based on the code and the global position; and
- e) a database coupled to the server and storing: (i) information related to a

consumer product that is accessible by specifying a product code for the consumer product, (ii) information representative of one or more vendors that sell said consumer product, and (iii) information representative of the global position of the one or more vendors.

14. The system according to claim 13, wherein said server is adapted to receive a request for location-specific information from said computer and retrieve and transmit said location-specific information to said computer, said location-specific information including a location of one or more local vendors that sell said selected product.

15. The system according to claim 13, wherein said database further comprises information representative of a price that each of said one or more vendors sells said consumer product.

16. The system according to claim 13, wherein said database further comprises information representative of a global position of overland routes, and said location-specific information further comprises a roadmap encompassing both a global position of the device and a global position of the local vendors.

17. A system for providing information to a user comprising:
a scanner converting a printed code of a selected primary consumer product into machine-readable information representative of said code;
a computer adapted to receive said machine-readable information from said scanner;
a server couplable to said computer;
a database couplable to said server and storing information representative of
(a) a universal product code for each of a plurality of primary consumer products,
and (b) a list of secondary consumer products that are related to each of said

plurality of primary consumer products;

said server adapted to receive a request for related consumer product information from said computer, said request including information representative of said machine-readable information; and

said server adapted to retrieve and transmit said related consumer product information to said computer, said related consumer product information comprising a list of one or more secondary consumer products that are related to said selected primary consumer product.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein said list of secondary consumer products is a list of complementary consumer products sold by a manufacturer of said selected primary consumer product.

19. The system of claim 17, wherein said list of secondary consumer products is a list of consumer products analogous to said selected primary consumer product.

20. The system of claim 17, wherein said consumer products analogous to said selected primary consumer product are sold by a manufacturer of said selected primary consumer product.

21. The system of claim 17, wherein said database is resident within a database server connected to the Internet.

22. The system of claim 17, wherein said database is resident within multiple database servers connected to the Internet.

23. The system of claim 17, wherein said database further comprises information representative of product specifications and satisfaction ratings for each primary and secondary consumer product, and said related consumer product information further comprises product specifications and satisfaction ratings for the selected primary consumer product and each secondary consumer product that is related to the selected primary consumer product.

24. The system of claim 17, wherein said database further comprises information representative of product pricing and availability at various vendors for each primary and secondary consumer product, and said related consumer product information further comprises pricing and availability at various vendors for the selected primary consumer product and each secondary consumer product that is related to the selected primary consumer product.

25. A method for retrieving information related to a consumer product comprising the steps of:

- scanning a product code related to the consumer product;
- automatically linking to a web site on a computer network based on said scanning step;
- providing the computer network with the scanned product code; and
- displaying information on the web site related to the consumer product.

26. The method according to claim 25, further comprising the steps of:

- storing the scanned product code into a removable memory;
- accessing the web site upon inserted the removable memory into a device having access to the computer network.

27. A method for retrieving information related to a consumer product comprising the steps of:

- scanning a product code related to the consumer product;
- automatically linking to a web site on a computer network based on said scanning step;
- determining a position where the product code was scanned; and
- displaying on a web site location specific information related to the consumer product.

28. A method for retrieving information related to a consumer product comprising the steps of:

- integrating a bar code scanner and a removable memory into a consumer good;
- scanning a bar code of a selected consumer product using the integrated scanner and storing the scanned bar code in the removable memory; and
- accessing a web site on a computer network based on the scanned bar code, wherein said web site includes information related to the selected consumer product.

29. The method according to claim 28, wherein said consumer good includes a consumer electronic device.

30. The method according to claim 28, wherein said consumer good includes a non-electronic device.

31. The method according to claim 28, further comprising converting a scanned bar code to a uniform resource locator (URL) of a web site.

32. The method according to claim 28, further comprising converting a scanned bar code and a global position to a uniform resource locator (URL) of a web site.

33. An apparatus for retrieving information related to a consumer product comprising:

a) a scanner converting a code of a selected consumer product into machine-readable information representative of said code; and

b) a user interface receiving a position code corresponding to a predetermined global position.

34. The apparatus according to claim 33, further comprising a transceiver couplable to a computer network.

35. The apparatus according to claim 34, wherein said transceiver accesses a web site on the computer network based on the code of the selected consumer product and the position code.

36. The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said position code is a U.S. Postal Service code.

37. An information retrieval and processing system comprising:

a) a scanner converting a printed code of a selected consumer product into machine-readable information representative of said code;

b) a user interface receiving a position code corresponding to a predetermined global position;

c) a computer coupled to the scanner and the user interface transmitting a request for information regarding the selected consumer product, said request including the position code and the code of said selected consumer product;

d) a server coupled to the computer receiving said request and transmitting a response to said request based on the product code and position code; and

e) a database coupled to the server and storing: (i) information related to a consumer product that is accessible by specifying a product code for the consumer product, (ii) information representative of one or more vendors that sell said consumer product, and (iii) information representative of the global position of the one or more vendors.

38. The system according to claim 37, wherein said server is adapted to receive a request for location-specific information from said computer and retrieve and transmit said location-specific information to said computer, said location-specific information including a location of one or more vendors local to said global position that sell said selected product.

39. The system according to claim 37, wherein said database further comprises information representative of a price that each of said one or more vendors sells said consumer product.

40. The system according to claim 37, wherein said database further comprises information representative of a global position of overland routes, wherein said location-specific information further comprises a roadmap encompassing both said predetermined global position and a global position of the local vendors.

41. A method for retrieving information related to a consumer product comprising the steps of:

scanning a product code related to the consumer product;

automatically linking to a web site on a computer network based on said scanning step;

displaying on a web site location-specific information related to the consumer product.